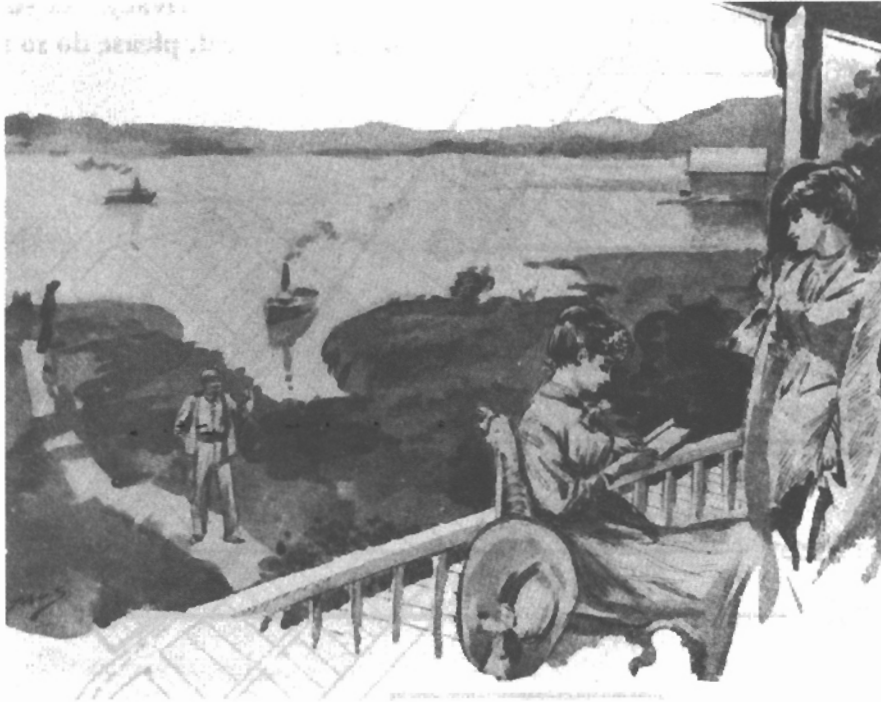


The South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club

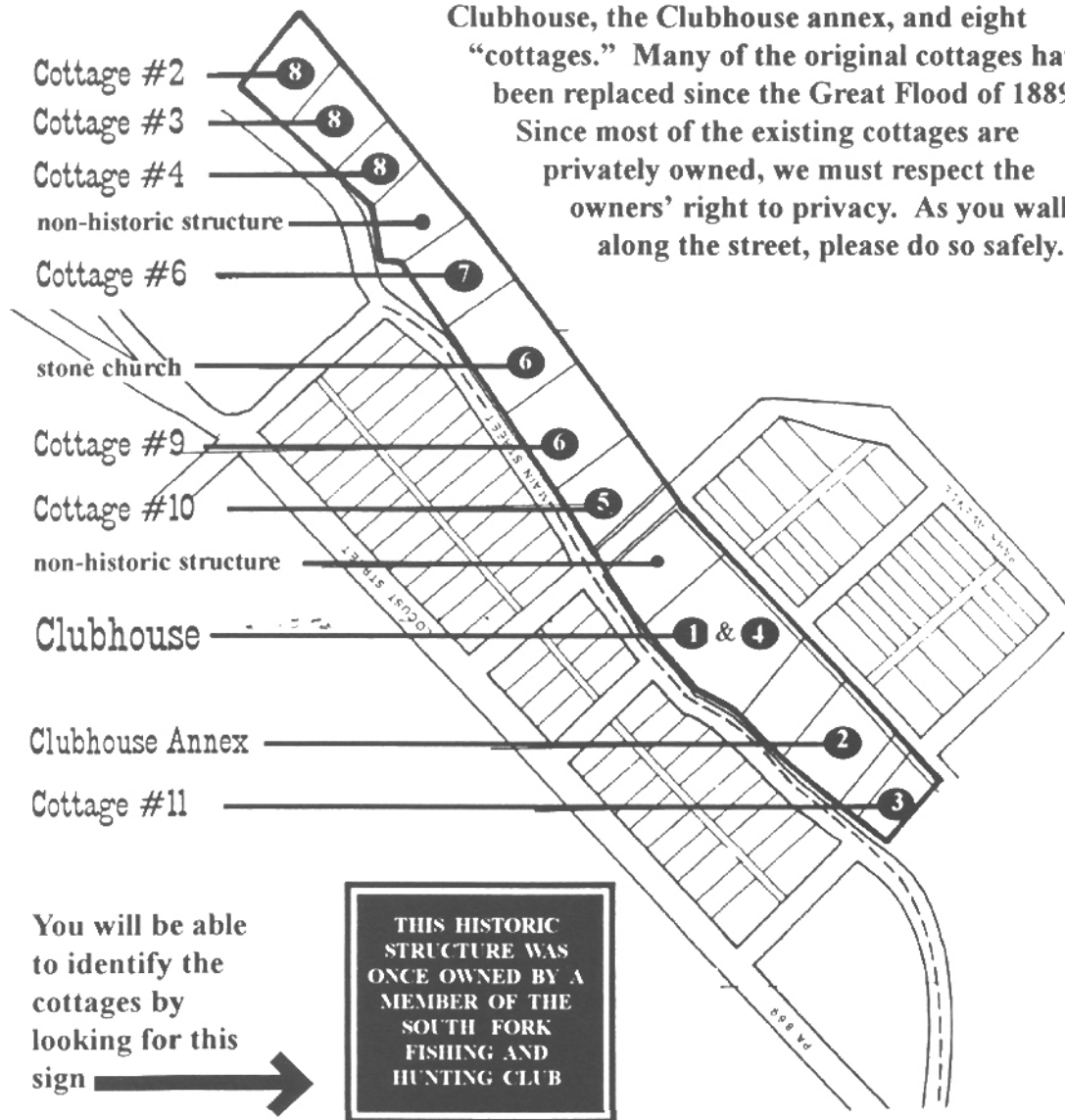


A Guided Walk through
the 1889 Historic District



Welcome to the 1889 Historic District

Along this street are some of the original structures of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club: the Clubhouse, the Clubhouse annex, and eight "cottages." Many of the original cottages have been replaced since the Great Flood of 1889. Since most of the existing cottages are privately owned, we must respect the owners' right to privacy. As you walk along the street, please do so safely.



Stop 1

The Clubhouse



After arriving in South Fork by train, Club members would travel along the scenic **carriage** road and would be dropped off behind the Clubhouse. Members had to be invited to join and paid \$100 per **share**, with two shares probably a minimum. Room and board at the Clubhouse cost \$1.60 per day. Morning would start with a full breakfast from 7:30 to 9:00. **Dinner** was served from 1:00 to 2:30 and from 6:30 to 8:00 evening **tea** was served.

The elegant dining room could seat 150 guests. It is thought that members were required to take their meals here. Since the building was along the shoreline, many

members took advantage of the pleasant view of Lake Conemaugh and the boats that graced its surface. Many took an opportunity to socialize, by either conversation in the parlor or playing **billiards** (at 10 cents per game or 30 cents per hour). Some of the **industrialists** smoked cigars on the porch and breathed the clean mountain air. Evening concerts provided an **aura** of entertainment and relaxation. Many families staying at the Clubhouse preferred the front rooms, which were heated by elegant brick fireplaces. No family was allowed to occupy more than one front room.

Stop 2 The Clubhouse Annex

According to the Club's regulations, "Servants will not be permitted to occupy rooms in the new part of the Club House." When members arrived for their stays, they often brought their family servants with them. To many local residents, the arrival of members and their servants meant the beginning of summer. The servants probably stayed in this building, the Clubhouse Annex. This building was also used to

house guests when the Clubhouse was full.

Indoor plumbing was one of the major projects of the 1889 season. Until then, members and guests had to rely on **privies**, including a two story outhouse located somewhere between the Clubhouse and Annex. Thus, although this may have been a piece of paradise, not everything was comfortable.

Stop 3 Cottages #11 & #14

If a Club member wished to stay for a long period and did not want to stay in the Clubhouse, he had the option to build his own cottage. We believe that there were 14 cottages along this shoreline, including the one in front of you (look for the sign). Unfortunately, we do not have any photographs of this cottage, and we do not know who lived here.

If you look down the street to your right, you will see a brown house (again, look for the **sign**). This, we believe, was

cottage number fourteen. Remember that as you look at the Club's buildings you are close to the shoreline.



Stop 4 In front of the Clubhouse again

On March 22, 1881 the Johnstown Daily Tribune reported: "During the spring and summer a hotel-building will be erected for the accomodation of stockholders who purchased the property, as well as invited guests..." As more members joined the Club more room was needed. Thus, the part of the Clubhouse that stands in front of you today was constructed around 1885. The original Clubhouse stood where the modern brick house stands today. When

completed, the Clubhouse had 47 rooms, including a milk room, vegetable room, and a **ballroom**. You can see the entire building in the photograph above.

The older portion of the Clubhouse was torn down earlier in this century. After the Great Flood the Clubhouse served as a hotel, restaurant and bar and is presently being restored by the local historical society.



Above, from left to right: Cottages #6, #7, #8, #9, and #10

Stop 5 Cottage #10

From this quaint white cottage, you can look across the street toward Route 869 and imagine Lake Conemaugh. The area in front of you was underwater. Along the shoreline you would have seen **boat-houses**, bridges, and **boatlaunches**.

The South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club owned **two steam yachts**, four sailboats, about fifty canoes and rowboats, and an electric **catamaran**. According to Club regulations, it cost 25 cents per hour and 10 cents per additional hour to use one of the Club's boats. The launching of boats was an important event each year, as was the annual "**Regatta and Feast of Lan-**

terns." The **regatta** on August 22, 1885 featured a procession of fifty boats drawn by a steam yacht, lit by five lanterns. This was followed by a **pyrotechnic** (fireworks) show.

Long before the Club was formed, this area was known for its great fishing. For those who loved to use the rod and **creel**, Lake Conemaugh was stocked with 1,000 black bass from Lake Erie. According to the Johnstown Daily Tribune on June 4, 1881, of the fish brought in only three died, one of which was a, "...huge old chap, weighing over three pounds."

Stop 6 Cottages #7, #8, & #9



One reason this Club was formed was to take advantage of the crisp, clean air. Notice that the cottages and Clubhouse have impressive porches. Many families would sit on their porches in the evening and soak in the atmosphere. On clear nights, while sitting under the stars, members would converse, listen to music, or play games.

Lake Conemaugh was one of the most scenic places in the area. There was probably nothing more relaxing than to picnic somewhere along the shore or near the spillway of the South Fork Dam.

Many cottages had interesting architectural features. Notice on cottage #9 the lattice, which was common with **Queen Anne** buildings.

These families were well versed in classical literature. Sometimes Club guests would dress in costumes and act out these classics in **vignettes** (also called **tableaus**). Shakespeare, Sophocles, and others were brought to life along Lake Conemaugh.



The stone church that you see was built over the lots on which cottages seven and eight stood.

Stop 7 Cottage #6



On the top of Cottage #6, used by the Charles Clarke family, residents took in the scenery from a **widow's walk**. These structures were featured on a few of the other cottages as well.



On warm summer days many found it refreshing to take a swim in the lake. The sounds of playing children filled the air.

Many members and guests spent time hunting wild game and shooting in competitions. Shooting and hunting was considered by many a gentleman's sport.



On June 3, 1884, for example, there was a shooting match at Lake Conemaugh. Out of 350 birds provided, 240 were killed. Club member C.A. Carpenter won a silver trophy, killing nineteen out of twenty birds. A fellow named D.C. Hostetter hit all ten targets in a **clay pigeon** shoot.

Club rules decreed that, "Fishing, shoot-



Louis Semple Clarke (left) and his brother John.

ing, or playing of any kind of games on Sunday, strictly prohibited, under penalty of fifty dollars." The Club strictly obeyed the state game laws.

During the centennial of the 1889 Flood, a collection of photographs was found which were taken by Louis Semple Clarke. His father, Charles, was an important man in Pittsburgh. Louis came to the lake with

his family and bought his own membership in April of 1889. He was a gifted photographer and inventor. It was Louis' steam yacht, "Captain Eads," that was used in the regatta of 1885.

We are grateful to Louis' granddaughter, Mrs. Virginia Anthony Soule, for giving these photographs to history.



Above, from left to right: Cottages #2, #3, #4, and #5 (a modern house now stands in its place)

Stop 8 Cottages #2, #3, & #4

Cottage #4 belonged to the family of James Brown and was completed in 1888. For years this building was said to be the cottage of Philander Knox, but research cannot prove that Knox owned or lived in a cottage. The cottages on this end are the grandest of them all. This building featured a wraparound porch, a hipped and gabled roof, and a beautiful **bay window**. From this hillside residents had a gorgeous view of Lake Conemaugh.

Although we cannot prove so, Cottage #3 is said to have been owned by Max Moorhead. This three-story Queen Anne structure featured beautiful windows and a **turret**. This cottage is the best example of a Queen Anne. The boardwalk that connected the cottages ran in front of the Moorhead cottage.

Cottage #2, to the left of the Moorhead cottage, belonged to Moses Suydam, whose business was in oils and paints. This building had a large porch and gabled roof. One of the few interior photographs of Club buildings was taken inside this cottage.

To the left of the Suydam cottage stood cottage #1, which was on the highest point of any of the cottages. Its most impressive feature was a large tower which could be seen from great distances. This cottage burnt down several years ago. As you look down over the hill try and imagine yet again Lake Conemaugh in the 1880s.



At the Clubhouse again...

The Club was in the news again in 1904. On February 25 of that year there was a public sale of the Clubhouse contents. Included were the billiards table, fifty bedrooms, furniture, silverware and other souvenirs. Lunch and coffee were served in the once-elegant dining room for the customers.

After May 31, 1889, the Club disbanded. Soon afterwards the boardwalks fell apart, and the buildings started to deteriorate. Many throughout the country believed that the Club was responsible for the disaster, since it was their dam that

failed. The Club will forever be linked to the disaster. We choose not to assign blame. We encourage you to think about the Johnstown Flood of 1889 and remember to look at the bigger picture. As you do so, imagine a life once lived along the shore of Lake Conemaugh, here in the beautiful Allegheny Mountains.

The Club in Retrospect

It was fashionable to be a member of an exclusive retreat during the latter part of the nineteenth century. There were several such retreats for the wealthy in the United States, and from 1879-1889 the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club was one of them. While perhaps not as fancy

as some of the others, this club allowed the powerful men of Pittsburgh to escape the pressures of what Mark Twain called the "Gilded Age."

As early as 1860, local residents tried to promote this area as a possible resort. One editor wrote, "The attractions of



Johnstown as a place of summer resort for the residents of the large cities are not appreciated--either at home or abroad.” The scenery was magnificent--clean water, crisp air, and, quite importantly, peace and quiet. Compared to Pittsburgh, where it was hard to see the sunsets and sunrises, this was paradise indeed. Another resort that once existed near here, at Cresson Springs, attracted powerful individuals as well as President Benjamin Harrison.

It is a fact that many in the Conemaugh Valley felt no alarm over the existence of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club. While some indeed were worried, most simply were not bothered by the Club and its dam. While it is believed that Club members had no concern for the victims of the Flood, about half of the membership contributed to relief efforts, with some members actively involved in the process. Although the Club ceased to exist after the 1889 disaster, the memories survived in the minds of members and their families; memories that continue to this day. We hope that you leave today with some of these memories.

Timeline

of the

South Fork Fishing & Hunting Club

May 19, 1879	Club incorporated as a nonprofit organization.
November 17, 1879	South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club is chartered in Allegheny County.
March 15, 1880	Land is formally conveyed(granted) to the Club.
Spring 1880	Work begun by Club's laborers, under the supervision of Edward Pearson, to repair the dam's failure in summer of 1862.
October 14, 1879	<i>Johnstown Tribune</i> reports that the "Western Game and Fish Association of Pittsburgh" had purchased the old reservoir.
December 25, 1879	Partial repairs to the dam washed away by a rainstorm.
1881	Repairs at the dam "complete"; lake stocked with the black bass from Lake Erie.
August 22, 1885	One of the believed-to-be annual "Regatta and Feast of Lanterns"
1887	Death of the Club's first president, Benjamin Ruff. Believed to be the year that Elias Unger became club president.
1888	The final of the "cottages" was built; used by the family of James Brown.
May 31, 1889	Johnstown Flood, failure of South Fork Dam, 2,209 killed.
1889-1907(est)	Some of the properties of the Club used to house homeless from the Flood (sometimes called the "Johnstown Flood Colony" period)
September 9, 1891	Mortgage foreclosure notice believed to have been issued.
June 26, 1901	Property turned over to E.B. Alsip, a trustee and supposedly a friend of the Club members.
1903	Coal is discovered in the former lakebed.
February 17, 1903	Property deeded from Alsip to George Harshberger.
February 25, 1904	Public sale/ auction of Club property (furnishings, place-setting, etc)
1907	The town of St. Michael was created by the Maryland Coal Company.



The Players...



Charles Clarke

Amassed a fortune from speculation in railroads, real estate, and securities. Clarke was one of the wealthiest men in Pittsburgh.

Henry Clay Frick

Founded the H.C. Frick Coke Company and made his first million by age 30. He is best remembered for his role in the bloody Homestead Strike.



Durbin Horne

Son of the department store founder Joseph Horne. Durbin succeeded his father as president, serving in that capacity until 1915. To this day Hornes is remembered as one of Pittsburgh's leading businesses.

Philander Knox

Successful attorney and businessman who became Attorney General in 1901 under Theodore Roosevelt. In 1909 Knox became Secretary of State under President William Taft.



Henry Phipps, Jr.

Chairman of Carnegie Steel and next door neighbor of Andrew Carnegie. Founder of the Phipps Conservatory located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Andrew Mellon

A powerful Pittsburgh banker who acquired one of the world's greatest private art collections. He established and endowed the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

Andrew Carnegie

Founder of Carnegie Steel. Best known for his philanthropy. By the time he died, he had given away ninety percent of his fortune.

Maxwell Moorhead

Assisted in his father's work of constructing the South Fork Reservoir. Maxwell became president of the Monongahela Navigation Co., a post he held until his death in 1897.



James W. Brown

Vice President of the Crucible Steel Company. He was later elected to U.S. House of Representatives.

Moses Suydam

Affiliated with the M.B. Suydam and Company, manufactures of white lead, color, ready mixed paints, and linseed oil. The M.B. Suydam Co. became a subsidiary of Pittsburgh Plate Glass (now PPG Industries) in 1946.



Glossary

Annex an added part.

aura particular atmosphere or quality that seems to arise from a person or thing.

ballroom large room for dancing.

bay window windows projecting out from the wall leaving a space in a room.

billiards a game

played with balls

and a stick

called a "cue"

on a special

table.



boathouses shed for boats.

boatlaunchers where boats were put into the water; set afloat.

carriage horse drawn passenger vehicle.

catamaran a narrow log raft or float propelled by sails or paddles

centennial celebration of the 100th anniversary.

classics literature of ancient Greece and Rome.

clay pigeon a saucerlike disc that is tossed in the air from a trap and used as a target.

cottage house at a resort or a summer home.

creel basket to hold fish.



dinner the main meal of the day.

gabled roof triangular wall enclosed by sloping ends of a ridged roof.

guest register a book where visitors signed their name.

hipped roof a roof with sloping ends and sides.

industrialists person who owns, controls, or has an important position in management of an industrial empire.

philanthropist person who loves mankind and works for its welfare.

privies outhouse.

pyrotechnic of fireworks

Queen Anne popular building style from the 18th century.

regatta boat race; series of boat races.

share portion or part into which the ownership is divided.

steam yachts boat run on steam used for pleasure trips or for racing.

tableau representation of a picture, statue, scene by persons.

tea a light meal in the late afternoon or early evening at which tea is commonly served.

turret small tower often on the corner of a building.

vignette a short, memorable scene in a play

widow's walk a platform with a rail around it, built onto the roof of a house.

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Test Your Knowledge

1. Name three members of the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club.
2. How much would it cost you to join the Club?
3. As a member of the Club, what kind of activities could you be involved in?
4. Name two types of boats used to glide along Lake Conemaugh.
5. Name the two presidents in the Club's history.
6. What happened to the Club after the Flood of May 31, 1889?